



Justin P. Wilson, Comptroller

September 18, 2017

Fraudulent Scheme Costs City of Decherd More Than \$210,000

The Tennessee Comptroller's Office, working in conjunction with the 12th Judicial District Attorney's criminal investigator, has revealed that the City of Decherd's former water and sewer superintendent and a local business owner engaged in a fraudulent billing and kickback scheme that cost the city at least \$210,774.

City officials first identified questionable activity and brought their concerns to the Comptroller's Office and District Attorney's office.

Investigators found that during the period January 2012 through August 2014, former superintendent James Wesley Parks assisted Poultry Electric and Hardware owner Jeff Frame in creating fraudulent invoices to the city totaling \$210,774. Investigators established that Frame's company was submitting fraudulent invoices to the city for equipment, supplies, chemicals and services that were never delivered.

Former water and sewer superintendent James Wesley Parks acknowledged the scheme and claimed that Frame shared the proceeds from this arrangement with Parks and another former city employee. Purchases from Poultry Electric and Hardware sometimes exceeded \$30,000 in a single month.

The investigative report includes examples and exhibits depicting fraudulent invoices for work that was never performed and fictitious products that were never received by the city.



In September 2017, James Wesley Parks was indicted by the Franklin County Grand Jury on one count of theft over \$60,000. Jeff Frame was also indicted by the Franklin County Grand Jury on one count of theft over \$60,000.

"As with so many of these cases, a significant problem within the City of Decherd allowed this scheme to go undetected for many months," said Comptroller Justin P. Wilson. "The former superintendent was solely responsible for ordering and approving the purchases from Poultry Electric and Hardware. These responsibilities should be separated."

City officials have indicated they have corrected or intend to correct these deficiencies.

To view the investigative report online, go to: <http://www.comptroller.tn.gov/ia/>.

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